POSTOFFICE CATS ARE LIKELY TO LOSE THEIR JOBS

Prospective Cutting Off of Food Allowances for Four-Footed and Furred Official Mail Protectors Causes Consternation Among the Select Felines.

THINKING IT OVER.

THOMAS, THE POSTOFFICE CAT.

MAY STRIKE.

MEOWS and caterwauls of grief are to be heard from Postoffice Department cats these days, for there is a rumor abroad that many of those in the postoffices throughout the country are to lose their food allowances and will have to hustle for a living among unofficial backyards, and associate with plebeian, spoils-grabbing felines which care naught for civil service and believe in taking everything they can get. Out in the cold, cold world they must roam, these Government cats, if their positions are abolished. No longer will they be the pampered favorites of women clerks and high officials, but they must henceforth fight with the midnight Toms for the possession of the decayed fish head and the well-picked bone.

Cats have figured on the Postoffice payrolls ever since George W. Beavers became chief of the division of salaries and allowances, and now that he has resigned it is said that the cats will not receive their monthly stipends. A fight for the retention of the cats on the rolls is, however, sure to be made, and their jobs may yet be saved. In some instances a stipulated sum is allowed for offices like those in New York, Chicago, Boston, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Detroit, and other cities.

Origin of the Cat Brigade.

Mr. Beavers conceived the public cat idea when he was a postoffice inspector. He was set to work on a case in a big city postoffice where a large sum of money was lost in transit through the mails. After working on the case for a long time, Mr. Beavers reached the conclusion that the money was not stolen, but was still in the building. He ordered a general overhauling and cleaning up of the office, and behind a file of dusty old records he found a rat's nest which had been made of the missing money. The inspector then suggested that a small sum be put aside by the officials of each large office for the support of the cats, but the suggestion was not adopted. Later, when he became chief of the salaries and allowance division, he instructed postmasters that they could spend money for cat food and charge it to the miscellaneous account. This is believed to be entirely within the law, and possibly no serious objection will be made to its continuance, for since the cats have been installed there has been a noticeable falling off in the number of letters which mysteriously disappear for no assignable reason.

The Treasury Well Guarded.

While there is no fund for the feeding of cats in any of the departments cutside of the Postoffice, all the public buildings in Washington have their full supply of felines, the Treasury being the head and center of catdom, and has been ever since Secretary Spinner introduced women into that department as clerks. There are cats there of every description and previous condition of servitude. In a great many instances these cats have made life a burden to many of the employes, and at different times orders have been issued by the powers that the immense building be cleared of felines—an order which has never been successfully carried out, for where one cat is driven away two come to take its place. The basement and sub-basement are full of cats, and many of them are as wild as March hares.

Recluse Toms and Tabbies.

It is said that some of these cats in the Treasury basement have never seen civilization, and are not on terms of friendship with any of the employes, religiously avoiding coming in contact with anyone. On the other hand, there are cats in the Treasury which will not visit any part of the great building except the offices of the high officials and clerks, and there is a constant and never ceasing warfare going on between basement and upstairs cats. One old ash colored Tom, known to all the clerks as Devil Dan, bears the reputation of being the cock of the walk, he having won in more hard fought battles than any cat in the building. The old fellow has been almost chewed and clawed to pieces time and again, but he gets patched up and goes to war again. Captain Clabaugh says he is the gamest cat he has any knowledge of. One big white fellow, weighing eighteen pounds, stays almost all the time in the luncheon room, and no other cat dares come near it. Naturally, this cat is a general favorite with the clerks and patrons of the luncheon room.

Demands Fish on Fridays.

Perhaps the Government Printing Office produces some of the most freaky cats to be found in the city. One, a large black fellow, was taken in hand by a young man named Newsom, and he says he succeeded in training him to that point where he would not eat meat on Friday. On this day the cat expected fish, and if he didn't get it, he would refuse meat and content himself with milk. Another cat makes his home in the proofroom—the "brainery"—and will not associate with the cats of the composing and press rooms. He seems to be afflicted with a severe case of swelled head, and does not wish to associate with the common herd.

A Costly Cat Fight.

It is related that a costly cat fight occurred in the Government "Printery" several years ago. Then, as now, there was a large force employed at night during the session of Congress. One night, about 11 o'clock, when everything was rushing along and the click, click, click of the type as they dropped in the sticks made music at the rate of 60 cents an hour for the compositors, suddenly there was a wild caterwauling in the center of the main room, and the cats went together at a lively rate, making the fur fly in every direction. Printers dropped their sticks and rushed out of the alleys to see the fun, and for ten minutes or thereabouts there was no work; but the worst part of the fight was that in the general stampede a form just ready for the press was pied the worst way. When the battle was over it was figured up that the loss of time, the pieing of the form, and the hilarity which followed had cost Uncle Sam about $400.

Secretary Wilson's Proteges.

Secretary Wilson, of the Department of Agriculture, is a great admirer of cats, and there are a number of fine mousers around the building. His orders are that the cats shall be carefully looked after and taken care of, and if an employe should be caught mistreating one of the Agricultural Department cats it is altogether certain that he would either be dismissed or receive a severe lecture.

There are a number of cats in the Pension Office, and Commissioner Ware says that while he has no special fondness for felines, he has no objection to their remaining in the building so long as they conduct themselves in a decorous manner. The best friends the cats have in the Pension Office are the watchmen, who feed them regularly, and the men on night duty have found that the cats are a great deal of company to them. There is one cat in the office said to be nearly thirty years old, and he is still a good fighter.

In the Department of Education there are several cats, and two of them are possessed of a large amount of sense, dropping motionless when told to "go dead;" standing on hind feet when told to play soldier, and a number of other tricks have been taught them.

In the mail bag repair shops, where a large number of women work, there is a drove of cats, and they are well fed by the employes, who find them a great deal of company during the long hours. This is one branch of the Postoffice Department where no allowance is made for the care of cats.

Driven Out by Hoke Smith.

Throughout the big Patent Office all kinds of cats may be found, and the clerks and employes see that they want for nothing in the way of food. When Hoke Smith was in office his rooms and offices were in this building, and clerks say that he had a hatred of cats, and messengers were instructed to keep them out of his offices.

There are fewer felines in the State, War, and Navy Departments than any other. Just why this is so no reason is assigned, save that there are fewer women employed there.

OWING TO CIRCUMSTANCES

BY FLORENCE M. BAILEY

THERE were three of them in the playing of this little comedy—or tragedy. She—the first "she," the one most concerned—was dark-eyed and lissome and altogether lovable, with a name unmistakably Irish and a voice that was as absolutely "country born."

Frewin, being very much of a "griffin," did not hear this defect until it was explained to him later by the usual well intentioned feline creature, and then it was a little too late—for Rose.

Meanwhile he had liked it; there is a certain note of appeal in the accent when the speaker, who is also young and pretty, is pointing out to you the snows and the various peaks, and telling you to ride rather slowly down that narrow track, because for newcomers it is somewhat risky, and then takes it herself at a gallop, which displays alike her perfect form and perfect riding.

Frewin, town-bred and hardly across a saddle until he came to India, looked upon the girl who could do this thing, when the edge of the khud (the descending side of a mountain road) breaking with each thud of her pony's hoofs, as something superior even to himself, which was about the highest compliment he could pay. Pitchforked into the C. S. with very little knowledge of the world in general and none whatever of India in particular, he had come out to be a small spoke in the great governmental machine. Happily—or otherwise—depends upon the point of view—he did not know his own insignificance even when posted to the Nazra station, which was a far cry from Simla and the upper ranks of the heaven born.

His almighty egotism, plus his superb ignorance of the small change of life and the ways of the world, caused his bearer to name him, within the second day's service, when detailing Frewin to a select audience of friends, the "Chota burra sahib" (the small great master), while the other C. S. men, with finer irony, had dubbed him the "Sub janta" (all knowing); which, not knowing, Frewin went on his way, fulfilled his duties with a thoroughness almost priggish in so young a boy, and occupied his spare hours riding with Miss Rowan—"Rose Mary"—it reminded him of convents and sweet simplicity, and things like that—and at a later stage he wrote some scrappy verses to her as "My Rosemary," without apology to Rossetti.

Besides the dark eyes, the bright face that surely changed some twenty times a minute, the gravely gay temper, there was nothing Irish about Rose. She had never "been home"—that great journey which softens the lot of even the country bred.

Her father had been a typical regiment doctor, who died as he had lived, very gay and very poor. A sister, married to a wealthy tradesman of Lucknow, who came up to Nazra Hills for the hot weather, was Rose's guardian and supporter.

It may be placed to Frewin's credit that the knowledge of Miss Rowan's monetary position, common property in the narrow little station, did not in[illegible] him; he was a rather careful [illegible] and still suffering from the effects of having been too well brought up, but he was not mercenary. Moreover, as the cynics of Nazra would remark, there was an elderly brother-in-law, with many rupees, and no children.

It was November when Frewin was gazetted to Nazra, consequently there were few people in the station, and the fact that Mrs. Burton, Rose's sister, remained up throughout the winter was an acceptable one to the newcomer.

Not that Frewin tried to convince himself that he frequented "The Deodars" for the pleasure of meeting fat Mrs. Burton, who perspired even in December, and whose conversation was strictly limited to the wicked ways of the servants, the shortcomings of her neighbors, and the weather. He owned, alike to himself and the club, that Miss Rowan was pretty and rode well, and could talk of India and its people even if she were totally ignorant of all things English, and could not appreciate the difference between an M. P. and a county councilor. So he, in his heavy way, taught her a little concerning England, and she, unknowingly, taught him many things Indian, and society, as known in Nazra, having gone down to Calcutta, there were fewer venom-tipped tongues to wag.

Not that Rose would have cared if all Anglo-India had risen to forbid her intercourse with this youthful civilian, who represented to her the whole glory of the British empire and the perfection of mankind. She adored with an unreasoning adoration which would have been foolish and superfluous in the heroine of a penny novelette.

She was only twenty, and life so far had meant to her a convent school and Nazra, with occasional weeks at Lucknow, and one whole fortnight of dissipation in Calcutta.

Moreover, she had the nature of a saint rather than a flirt, and it was her amazingly angelic temper which most won Frewin. A man likes that sort of Griselda girl—until it palls, and he wants a change.

So they rode and danced and dined together throughout the four months' winter, while Mrs. Burton beamed propriety and conveniently went to sleep.

There was no definite engagement, but just the mutual understanding which seems almost sweeter when you are young and foolish, and the world is gay—the state which "versteht sich von selbst," as the expressive German phrase goes.

Frewin wrote home fanciful accounts, in confidence, to his favorite sister (it is a curious fact that most griffins do this), and wrote Rose many chits when he should have been attending to the service of government. The spring wind blew rose leaves through their small particular world and made life a glad thing.

March brought back Nazra's summer population, including sundry of the heaven born, without whose guiding hands the station managed to do very well during the winter months, but who were absolutely necessary to the working of things there when it began to warm up in the plains.

Old C. S. men, with many rupees and few joys, owing to their touchy livers—or their wives, younger ditto, to whom Nazra meant little work, much gayety, and many flirtations, and who voted India "immense," not being able to see from their comfortable place on the top rung that Anglo-India was situated chiefly at the bottom of the latter, in steaming plains, where there was small leisure and less heart for polo and lawn tennis: sick men who had been considerately sent up by their firms in order to save giving them six months to England; men without their wives, longing for them daily; men with their wives, wishing them anywhere but in Nazra hourly; pallid, snarly-tempered women, with babies that were ditto, only more so; objectionable Anglo-Indian children, compared with whom the American genus is as an angel—all the miscellaneous, unwholesome collection, of varied color, which swarms up to an idyllic hill station and makes it Hades.

The Nazra crowd included the usual limited number of "just out" girls, brought out by their respective relatives as marriageable lots, under which headings came Miss Ethel Maynard. She was the most perfect specimen possible of the conventional English girl—the sort you saw every Wednesday in "Punch" in Du Maurier's time, tall, fair, well-dressed, warranted irreproachable in conversation and deportment, with a knowledge of all the polite accomplishments and no grain of originality or tenderness in her whole body—the kind of woman a man marries because she suits his dining table and the family plate. He is never ashamed of her, but as the years go on he gets very tired, and generally he lives his real life apart.

It was at what the newspaper hack still continues to describe as a "minor function" that Miss Maynard met Miss Rowan; naturally, Miss Rowan, being associated with trade, was not asked to the great functions.

"That is Miss Rowan?" in response to Frewin's directing nod. "O!"—the Englishwoman's nasty little "O!" with a significant pause after it. "She is the"—Miss Maynard almost said "person"—"the same who did that extraordinary thing last week—galloped a mile and a half at night, alone, to see some native?"

She was still honoring Rose with the stare known in vulgar English as polite. Frewin, not being a large-minded man, felt awkward under Miss Maynard's disapproval. Yet he had thought at the time, when Rose had shyly told him of the incident, how splendid it was of her.

"Er—it was a very old servant—her mother's ayah, I believe," he replied, "and she was dying, and sent a message to her missie baba," he broke off, lamely.

It sounded really absurd now, and Miss Maynard's light, cold eyes were disconcerting.

Then he did a foolish thing, even for a griffin with no tact—he introduced Rose to Miss Ethel Maynard. There was the usual stiff five-minute conversation, and as Rose moved away Miss Maynard noticed that the last look was to Frewin.

Ignoring the look and what it told her—cruelty comes naturally to many women—Miss Maynard, with Rose barely out of hearing, asked briefly:

"Country born?"

Only that—with the exquisite inflection of the most refined and utter contempt natural to a pucca "girl from home."

"Er—yes—I believe so," said Frewin, in a vague tone, as if he wished he could deny it, and completed his confusion by adding, "She's really Irish, you know."

Miss Maynard laughs the Englishwoman's little laugh of polite incredulity.

"Yes? Funny thing, isn't it? They are generally Scotch."

Luckily, Frewin's Indian experience has not been sufficiently lengthy for him to appreciate the insult applied.

But when he rides with Rose next day, the soft staccato voice, jars on him for the first time, the many trifling ignorances strike him in a new light, and she quivers at his irritable tone.

The idyll's ending was swifter than had been its beginning. Miss Maynard was only one of many who, with the very best intentions—was there ever yet a woman who did harm without these same good intentions?—told him more or less candidly that it was simply impossible that he should think seriously of "that Rowan girl." His chief's wife, who had a peculiar aptitude for managing other people's affairs, reasoned with him urgently; the owners of the marriageable lots, viewing Frewin as a young man likely to come on in the service, asked him to dine; while the lots themselves, observing that he was quite a nice-looking boy, and would probably have a comfortable billet later, flirted with him to a degree that simple hearted Rose had never attempted. The long solitude a deux was ended, and even when it was possible to renew it Frewin showed no eagerness to do so. A place was made for him in Nazra society, by virtue of his position and its probabilities, and his eminently respectable relations at home, but there was no room for Miss Rowan in the same circle.

She missed Frewin, and being young and foolish, did not understand. Out of the fullness of her loving heart she wrote him notes which made him frown and put on his judicial look—the same look which in later years he gave subs when he told them that "this course must be immediately discontinued."

He wrote replies that were vague excuses at first, and stiffly formal denials later.

Rose cried over them, and the strange pain that had come into life grew greater with each letter. She wrote a last appeal, full of loving foolishness and angelic forgiveness, and went up to the little Catholic chapel to petition that the answer might be as she would have it.

And Frewin wrote back that "owing to circumstances—circumstances over which neither of them had any control—he had been forced to the conclusion that any more intimate relations than those of friends would not be wise for either," etc.

It was a long, semi-official letter, trying to justify a position of which even Frewin had the grace to be ashamed; but the long words and careful phrasing were lost on a girl whose heart was broken.

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"By the way, Frewin," says a man at dinner, in the after years when Frewin is high in the service, and the former Miss Maynard is presiding over his house and name, with all the chill dignity of which she gave promise, "who do you think nursed me when I was in the hospital with typhoid last month? That pretty Rowan girl who used to be at Nazra when you were there. Went into a convent, and is a hospital sister now. Funny thing for her to do, wasn't it?"

The speaker's tone is light. The matter is only a dinner table topic to him.

But Frewin responds, "Yes—I should think so," so absently, his eyes looking back on life's yesterday for a moment, that his wife tells the kitmagar rather sharply that the burra sahib is wanting champagne.—Black and White.

No Perfect Vacuum Yet.

PROF. WILLIAM CROOKES, the eminent chemist, has this to say of the present impossibility of obtaining a perfect vacuum:

"According to the hypothesis I ventured to formulate, I have little doubt that radium would cease to show its peculiar properties in a perfect vacuum. But such experiments at present are impossible of performance. What we call a 'high vacuum' is only a vacuum by courtesy. Most experiments in so-called high vacua have been performed at an exhaustion of about a millionth of an atmosphere, at which the phenomena of the radiometer, radiant matter, x-rays, and electric non-conduction can be observed. But what does an exhaustion to the millionth of an atmosphere really mean? Practically nothing! It may seem that when the originally tenuous air is reduced to the millionth part of its bulk, so little will be left that we are justified in neglecting the trifling residue, and in applying the term vacuum to space from which the air has been so nearly removed. This, however, is a fallacy due to our difficulty in grasping the meaning of high numbers. In the present case the original number is so high that division by a million appears to make a scarcely appreciable difference. For instance:

"A glass bulb similar to those used in high vacua experiments, five inches in diameter, contains more than a quadrillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) molecules. Now, when the bulb is exhausted to the millionth of an atmosphere, it still contains more than a trillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000) molecules—quite enough matter to produce all the effects demanded by my hypothesis."

Red Men at the World's Fair.

ONE of the most instructive and interesting exhibits of the coming St. Louis World's Fair, will be the Indian exhibit, showing the advancement of the various races and tribes.

Secretary of the Interior Hitchcock has detailed, in accordance with a request received from the exposition authorities, Samuel M. McGowan, superintendent of the Chilocco Indian School of Oklahoma, to confer with the officials of the exposition, with a view to making the Indian exhibit of the highest possible order.

It is the desire of the exposition management to associate the Indian exhibit with the general anthropological exhibit, upon a scientific basis and under conditions which will meet the approval of the Interior Department.

When Lee and Grant Met.

"IT was nearly thirty-eight years ago," said a St. Louis paper recently, "that Gen. Robert E. Lee received from Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, his generous conqueror, a reply to his note offering to surrender, and rode rapidly in to the village of Appomattox Courthouse to see the representative of the Federal forces." W. C. B. Gillespie, of Macon, who appears to be a stickler for the truth of history, has detected one error in this statement, and writes to the "Macon Republican" to correct it. General Lee, he declares, did not ride rapidly. He was in no great hurry to surrender. "It so happened," says Mr. Gillespie, "that I was riding along the road on which General Lee was coming from his camp, in plain view of Appomattox, riding on his fine iron-gray steed, at what I supposed was the regular walking gait of the horse, sitting erect in his saddle, his white hair somewhat long and having that fine commanding appearance for which he was noted. He was coming to fill an appointment with General Grant, accompanied by General Marshall, his chief of staff, and an orderly in the rear. But he was not riding rapidly, he was not running a race with time, but was letting his horse move at its regular pace, his face rather sorrowful looking, as was natural under the circumstances, but not downcast. I stopped while he passed and gave him the military salute, which he recognized."

America Mother of Asia.

THE continuous work of archaeologists tends more and more to the presumption that ancient America was the land where the civilization of Asia itself originated. The curator of the American section, Museum of Science and Art in the University of Pennsylvania, Stewart Culin, contributes a suggestive article on the subject. Mr. Culin points out many striking resemblances between the games of chance played by early American Indians, and those now in use in India, Korea and China. Among these the Hindu game of "pachisi," is almost identical with "patolli," as played by the Aztecs in old Mexico. Incidentally, the game of pachisi, with which all American children are familiar, is a development from the pachisi which Mr. Culin and others regard as one of the important links in the evidence identifying Eastern and Western civilization, as he explains in his article.

An Arab Love Song.

Translated by PERCY F. MONTGOMERY.

Since in thy time thou hast found one to love thee and be true,
I charge thee with that one remain,
Casting the wide, wide world away,
For youth's first love ne'er comes again,
And, by thy love, I'll ne'er forget the troth betwixt us plight
Though life shall pass in longing for thy sight;
E'en as the ringdove doth lament,
So will I weep by day and night,
Till zephyrs fragrant from the dawn adown the distant hills
Bear answers to thy mystic strain
And teach thee peace amid the strife
Of struggling passion's angry pain;
Till the broken years on the stream of Time slip into the past
And thou and I have seen the light;
Till thou art by my side again
And love hath taught the world its might.

French as Americans Speak It

SOME amusing incidents are recounted of Americans who visit France, only to find that the pronunciation which they have always supposed to be the purest Gallic is Greek to the native of la belle France. One which will bear repetition is told at the expense of a Washingtonian, who, on his first visit to Paris, strolled into a restaurant and feeling extremely hungry, thought to apologize for the size of the order which he intended to give, by saying to the waiter, "J'ai faim" (I am hungry).

Clearing his throat, he volunteered in his best Parisian accent, J'ai femme," which in the English tongue is, "I have a wife."

The waiter hardly understood what connection the gentleman's private relation had to do with the dinner, but with true French politeness raised his eyebrows, and remained silent. The guest saw he had not quite hit the mark. Moistening his lips, he again essayed the phrase. This time he succeeded in saying "J'ai fame," which, being interpreted, is "I am famous."

Again the waiter looked puzzled, but though he may have had his own ideas as to the modesty of the statement, he merely preserved his look of polite interest.

Blank was discouraged for a moment. Then he gathered himself for a final attempt.

"Je suis femme," he blurted out, feeling himself growing red to the roots of his hair.

Puzzled no longer, the waiter fell upon him in a twinkling and threw him out bodily.

All In the Count.

ONE man thinks he has discovered the cause of the remarkable age attained by negroes. These instances are far from rare in Dixieland, and the obituary of more than one colored servant relates that deceased often spoke of Lafayette, George Washington, and others. It is largely a matter of arithmetic—bad arithmetic.

One of the two servants in this family is a colored mammy. The other day she went to her employer and said:

"Mars John, what you-all goin' to gib me on mah buhfday?"

"When is your birthday, Auntie?" he asked.

"Comes on Eastuh Sunday."

"How old will you be?"

"Eighty. Ah reckon ah be 'bout eighty."

"Eighty!" he exclaimed. "Why, you can't be more than sixty, as spry as you are."

"'Deed ah's eighty, sah. Ah was sixteen w'en Ab'aham Linkum was shot."

WHEN A MAIDEN WEDS.

When a maiden weds,
All her friends look pleasant,
Wink, and nod their heads.
When a maiden weds,
Everybody sheds
Cash to make a present.
When a maiden weds,
All her friends LOOK pleasant.
—Life.